

## FOSTER YOUTH'S BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You have all of the rights listed here. In real life there are times when someone might not know that you have these rights. Sometimes you'll need to remind people of your rights. Stand up for yourself and find others who will help you get these rights. You are in foster care to keep you safe. Sometimes being safe does not allow you to have all of your rights. For example, you have the right to visit with your family and friends, however, sometimes your family and friends cannot make safe decisions so it is not safe for you to visit with them. Talk with your social worker if you think someone is taking away your rights and you don't understand why.

Rights come with responsibilities. You have the responsibility to treat other members of your foster family as you wish to be treated. You have the responsibility to respect the rules, behave sensibly and safely. Building relationships is a two-way street. Using common sense and listening to others are positive ways to get your needs met and build good healthy relationships while you are in foster care.

### You have the right to a safe and caring setting.

Right	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ To live in a foster home with people who care for you;</li><li>▪ To be treated with respect and fairness no matter your past, gender, race, sexual orientation, and/or religion;</li><li>▪ To receive food, clothing, and shelter;</li><li>▪ To have items needed for grooming and personal cleanliness;</li><li>▪ To have your cultural beliefs and values respected;</li><li>▪ To have your own hobbies and interests as long as they are not harmful to you or disturbing to others; and</li><li>▪ To take your personal belongings with you when you leave a foster home.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ To respect those people who are opening their homes to you;</li><li>▪ To treat other members of your foster family with respect and fairness no matter their gender, race, sexual orientation, and/or religion;</li><li>▪ To help add to the well being of the household;</li><li>▪ To take care of those items that are provided for you;</li><li>▪ To respect the cultural beliefs and values of others in your foster home;</li><li>▪ To respect the hobbies and interests of others in your foster family;</li><li>▪ To take your belongings with you.</li></ul>

### You have the right to health and education services.

Right	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ To have medical, dental, and mental health care;</li><li>▪ To receive education, career guidance, and independent living skills.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ To do all you can to keep yourself healthy and safe;</li><li>▪ To take part in your education, career guidance, and independent living skills programs.</li></ul>

**You have the right and responsibility to be involved in your case services. You are an important part of the team who makes decisions about your life.**

Right	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To make sure you are heard by those who make decisions about your life by speaking your mind;</li> <li>▪ To advocate for your beliefs;</li> <li>▪ To ask for help and to keep asking until you get the help you need</li> <li>▪ To take part in the development of your service/case plan;</li> <li>▪ To help identify placement resources for yourself;</li> <li>▪ To know what is expected of you by your social worker and foster family;</li> <li>▪ To receive information about decisions affecting you and your case.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To speak in a respectful manner and listen to the answers;</li> <li>▪ To understand and respect the beliefs of others;</li> <li>▪ To listen politely to the answers you get when you ask for help;</li> <li>▪ To give information and follow through with your service/case plan;</li> <li>▪ To help identify placements that will improve your well being and help you succeed;</li> <li>▪ To let your social worker and foster family know what you think will help you succeed;</li> <li>▪ To review the decisions that affect you and let your social worker know if it works for you.</li> </ul>

**You have the right to have contact with people who can help you.**

Right	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To have contact with your attorney and other adult supporters;</li> <li>▪ To know how to get in contact with your social worker and/or the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS);</li> <li>▪ To speak to your social worker privately face to face at a minimum of every 90 days;</li> <li>▪ To have your conversations kept confidential;</li> <li>▪ To attend all court hearings about your case and get the day and time they are to be held before the court date;</li> <li>▪ To have a court-appointed attorney if you are over 12 years of age and/or to have a GAL/CASA represent you in court if you have been abused, neglected, or abandoned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To insist on contact with your attorney and other adult supporters, if you do not get it;</li> <li>▪ To respect the busy schedule of your social worker and make contact if it is about your safety or well-being;</li> <li>▪ To insist on meeting with your social worker privately at least every 90 days if you haven't met with them.</li> <li>▪ To respect the privacy of others;</li> <li>▪ To involve yourself in the court hearings and give honest information;</li> <li>▪ To insist on representation by a GAL/CASA or court-appointed attorney, if one is not provided.</li> </ul>

## You have the right to personal contact with family and friends.

Right	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To send and receive uncensored mail;</li> <li>▪ To have private telephone calls if not restricted by your service plan and/or court order;</li> <li>▪ To visit with family members unless it is restricted by your service plan or court order.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To send and receive mail that is not a danger to your health and safety;</li> <li>▪ To respect the right to private telephone calls by following house rules and the rights of others;</li> <li>▪ To visit with your family in a caring way.</li> </ul>

You are never expected to put up with any kind of abuse. Abuse can be physical, mental, or emotional. The following are some numbers that you can call to get help.

### Important Telephone Numbers

ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Emergency	911
Child Abuse Reporting Hotline	1-866-END-HARM (363-4276)
Washington Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-562-6025
Drug & Alcohol Abuse Hotline	1-800-662-4357
Alateen (AA for 12-19 year olds)	1-800-356-9996
Girls and Boys Town Hotline (When you just need to talk)	1-800-448-3000
The Trevor Hotline (hotline for gay, lesbian, transgender and questioning youth )	1-800-850-8078
National Hopeline Network (Crisis counseling)	1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
C. L. E.A.R (free legal advice 9:30 AM - 12:30pm)	1-888-201-1014
United Indians (Resources for Native American Youth) <a href="http://www.goia.wa.gov/directory/toc.html">http://www.goia.wa.gov/directory/toc.html</a>	(206) 325-0070
National Runaway Hotline	1-800-241-6946
National Runaway Switchboard (message service and tickets home)	1-800-621-4000
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (help for pregnant teens and teen mothers)	1-800-322-2588

## The Law and Your Rights

Some of your rights are Washington State Laws. You can find them in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) or in the Washington Administrative Codes (WAC):

Revised Code of Washington	Washington Administrative Code
RCW 13.13.030	WAC 388-148-0405
RCW 13.34.020	WAC 388-148-0410
RCW 13.34.040	WAC 388-148-0415
RCW 13.34.050	WAC 388-148-0430
RCW 13.34.062	
RCW 13.34.100	
RCW 13.34.165	
RCW 26.44.030 (1)(a)	

### Information

For a more complete explanation of your rights and other information please see *"Surviving Foster Care", a handbook for youth entering foster care*, DSHS publication 22-364 (X). It will give you definitions for words that will be used while you are in foster care and will give you advice on how other children and youth are dealing with foster care. It will also explain what your responsibilities are while in foster care and the need for you to follow court orders. For more information on the Internet go to <http://www.fycentral.org> and click on My Rights or see how Ontario, Canada views the "Rights of Youth in Care" <http://www.hri.ca/realdeal/rights.htm>.